

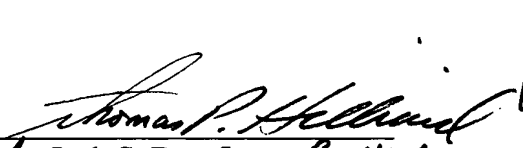

REMARKS

By this Preliminary Amendment, Applicants have amended claims 1, 5, 6, 7, 15 and 18. No new matter has been introduced. A first Action on the merits is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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Appendix

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APPENDIX

Version with Markings to Show Changes Made

IN THE CLAIMS:

The claims are amended as follows:

1. A die assembly, comprising:

a base;

a lower, adjustable post having a base-contacting surface that is mounted for linear movement with respect to said base between a first cutting position and a second cutting position, including movement in a first direction;

a first force applying mechanism coupled to said base and to said adjustable post to move said adjustable post between said first cutting position and said second cutting position;

an upper, impacting post being movable between an impact position proximate to said adjustable post and an elevated, removed position in which said impacting post is displaced away from said impact position and said adjustable post, including being movable in a second direction that is transverse to said first direction; and

a second force applying mechanism coupled to said impacting post to move said impacting post between said removed position and said impact position,

said first force applying mechanism including a force applying element connected between a first force applying device and said adjustable post, with said force applying device constructed and arranged to move said force applying element against said adjustable post, which moves said adjustable post along said base and between said first and second cutting positions, and said force applying device being configured and arranged to secure said force applying element against movement, which secures said adjustable post from moving from a desired position during cutting, and said impacting post moving along a cutting axis that is fixed relative to said base.

5. (Amended) A die assembly according to claim 1, wherein said first force applying [mechanism] device is a pressure cylinder.

6. (Amended) A die assembly according to claim [1] 5, wherein said pressure cylinder contains nitrogen.

7. (Amended) A die assembly according to claim 1, wherein
said adjustable post includes a first side and a second side, which is opposite to said first side, and said first force applying [mechanism] device includes a first pressure cylinder positioned adjacent to said first side of said adjustable post to apply pressure on said first side of said adjustable post and a second pressure cylinder positioned adjacent to said second side of said adjustable post to apply pressure on said second side of said adjustable post.

15. (Amended) A method of cutting, comprising:
providing a die assembly having a base, an adjustable post coupled to the base in a first position such that the adjustable post is linearly movable with respect to the base, and an impacting post movable along a cutting axis that is fixed relative to the base and movable between an impact position proximate to the adjustable post and a removed position in which the impacting post is displaced away from the impact position and the adjustable post;
inserting a first piece of a first material between the adjustable post and the impact post, the first piece of the first material having a first thickness;
moving the impacting post along a fixed cutting axis from the removed position to the impact position and cutting the first piece of the first material;
moving the impacting post to the removed position;
sliding the adjustable post along the base to a second position by activating a first force applying device, which moves a force applying element against the adjustable post to move the adjustable post to the second position;
activating the force applying mechanism to secure the force applying element and to secure the adjustable post from moving away from the second position during cutting;
inserting a first piece of a second material between the adjustable post and the impact post, the first piece of the second material having a second thickness; and
moving the impacting post along the fixed cutting axis from the removed position to the impact position and cutting the first piece of the second material.

18. (Amended) A die assembly, comprising:
a base;

an adjustable post having a base-contacting surface that is slidably coupled to said base;

a first force applying mechanism coupled to said base and to said adjustable post to move said adjustable post between a first cutting position and a second cutting position;

a second force applying mechanism; and

an impacting post attached to said second force applying mechanism and movable by said second force applying mechanism between an impact position proximate to said adjustable post and a removed position in which said impacting post is displaced away from said impact position and said adjustable post,

said first force applying mechanism including a force applying element connected between a first force applying device and said adjustable post, with said force applying device constructed and arranged to move said force applying element against said adjustable post, which moves said adjustable post along said base and between said first and second cutting positions, and said force applying device being configured and arranged to secure said force applying element against movement, which secures said adjustable post from moving from a desired position during cutting, and said impacting post moving along a cutting axis that is fixed relative to said base.

End of Appendix